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ABSTRACT

The Black administrator, whose role in higher education has been important historically in predominantly Black colleges and universities and also within predominantly White institutions, will become even more important in the future as demographics and technology continue to change. In general, Black administrators have been given responsibility at predominantly White institutions but not the corresponding power. Too often the Black administrator's role is to trouble-shoot with Black students and the Black community. The future of the historically Black institutions will depend on the leadership of their administrators. The role of administrators at these institutions has included many "positions" integral to the school. Given the changing demographics in higher education, institutions must spend effort and money on developing the administrators of the future. Programs designed to promote the development of strong leaders center on equipping administrators to rethink and expand their vision of the academic mission, renew their sense of intellectual confidence, overcome isolation, and deepen their understanding of leadership's demands. It is less and less possible for top administrators to rise from the faculty. Administrators must have training in the many facets of institutional leadership. Consequently, institutions must support the development of Black administrators for positions of real authority. Included are 15 references. (JB)

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BLACK ADMINISTRATORS AS MANAGERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

The role of the Black administrator in higher education is one of importance not only to historically and predominantly Black colleges and universities but to predominantly white institutions as well - and that role will become more crucial in the years ahead as demographics and technology continue to change. Higher education needs leaders who are intensely committed, skilled, informed, and above all, dedicated to the welfare of students. Consequently, higher education must realize and appreciate the invaluable contributions Black administrators provide as part of a vibrant educational institution. Dr. Delores Cross, president of Chicago State University was quoted as saying, "You not only formulate the plan for the institution, you have to get people motivated and involved in that plan so it can be carried out. Its a big job." Thus, this requires the administrator having talent and foresight to deal with a diverse population with diverse needs. Charles Tucker pointed out that "running a university, or a department or a program, then, is certainly no task for the weak of mind - or, for that matter, of body. The patience, insight, and sheer stamina required are incredible."[1]

In addition, the role of the Black administrator is one that requires sensitivity to outside forces that impact on the institution. Recognizing the importance of including minorities as

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[1]Charles H. Tucker, "The Cycle, Dilemma, and Expectations of the Black Administrator," Journal of Black Studies 10 (March 1980): 313.

part of a strong educational institution is what makes the challenge of meeting community needs even more exciting.[2] The Black administrator must be able to discern, or help discern, those directions that the institution will undertake. Critically, "they must possess the skills to cope with the normal duties assigned them as well as those special demands placed upon them - particularly in predominantly white universities - by virtue of their blackness."[3] To that end, the November, 1991 issue of Ebony magazine quotes Dr. Irvin D. Reid, president of predominantly white Montclair State College in New Jersey: "You must be as confident as any other administrator if you hope to have any chance of making a difference." There is no place in higher education for the administrator who is timid or uneasy about making decisions and subsequently, implementing those decisions. W.E.B.DuBois said:

> The immediate program of the American Negro means nothing unless it is mediate to his great ideal and the ultimate ends of his development ...[Tucker, 1980].

Ultimately, the Black administrator has to always believe and function as though he will make a difference. Often, he will be operating under novel and frustrating circumstances. However, he must never allow himself to become so completely baffled about the seemingly impossible competing demands and priorities he faces.

This paper will examine the historical and existing roles of the Black administrator in the university setting, aimed at

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[2]Keith T. Miller, "Formula for Success: A Study of Minorities in Academe Who Are Making It," College and University Personnel Association Journal 42 (Spring 1991): 27.

[3]Tucker, 313.

identifying problems and practices that inhibit and/or enhance chances of being truly effective. Further examination will emphasize necessary requisites the Black administrator for the future will need in order to adequately address the increasing demands higher education is facing and thereby places on its administrators. To that end, particular aspects endemic to the Black administrator in higher education are addressed.

THE UNIVERSITY SETTING

The phenomenal increase of Black students attending white colleges and universities in recent years stands as a monument to the student protests, demonstrations, confrontations, and the riots that disrupted educational institutions in the 1960s.[4] The unquestionable triggering mechanism for this happening was the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King,Jr. and the subsequent riots. That was the "bullet" that split the souls of many Blacks who had glorified nonviolence and despised force (Hale 45). While this tragic and devastating result "forced" universities to face the necessity of hiring more Blacks, the reality was most of these appointments were in "designated" positions. The other co-result of that tragedy was the massive recruiting efforts by white colleges and universities to increase the number of Black students on their campuses. Thus, these institutions began to design and develop programs and policies that would be congruent with the needs of their new populations. This effort created opportunities

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[4]Frank W. Hale, Jr., "A Sprinkle of Pepper: The State of Black Influence in White Colleges and Universities," Journal of Non-White Concerns in Personnel and Guidance 3 (January 1975): 45.

where Blacks were sought primarily to help "deal" with these "new" students.

What has evolved since that time is a unique dilemma for the Black administrator in white academia faces an unique dilemma. Tucker states that this dilemma has been confounded by what he describes as "too many people expect too many things from the Black administrator in higher education, particularly in white-controlled institutions."[5] Tucker further says this phenomenon resulted in large part, from a "serious lack of information."[6] As a consequence of this lack of information, historically the Black administrator has not been given real power in order to make those decisions that have the potential to obtain the needed results. Moore and Wagstaff cite that one of the Black administrator's greatest frustrations in predominantly white institutions traditionally has been not having their positions defined.[7] If we take a cursory look at what has happened to the Black administrator following the assassination of Dr. King, Calvert Smith says, "most of these appointments were made to appease the Black community and to maintain the flow of federal dollars into the institutions concerned."[8] In retrospect, the problems that the Black

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[5]Tucker, 311.

[6]Tucker, 311.

[7]W. Moore, Jr. and L. Wagstaff, Black Educators in White Colleges (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974), 201.

[8]Calvert Hayes Smith, "The Peculiar Status of Black Educational Administrators-The University Setting," Journal of Black Studies 10 (March 1980): 323.

administrator has had in this particular setting can be directly traced to what Smith espoused: "Black administrators have been given responsibility, but they have not been given power and authority in the formal administrative structure of the institution commensurate with that responsibility."[9] History has borne out that regardless of the job title or position, the major function of the Black administrator in white academia has been to trouble-shoot with Black students and with the Black community. The following statement characterizes the historical plight of the Black administrator in predominantly white institutions:

> Because Black administrators were hired to pacify the Black community and/or to demonstrate that the hiring institution is an "equal opportunity employer", neither of which is legitimate, the leadership which they could provide based on their knowledge of given issues is neither accepted nor respected by those who must be influenced.[10]

In spite of this seemingly, and obviously, historical complacent and cavalier attitude toward the Black administrator, recent Black leaders say that in order to lead their institutions effectively, they must remain calm and certain. Montclair State College's president, Dr. Reid, says, "You must never go into this kind of job assuming you are a token."[11] Miller cautions that a by-product of tokenism is the typecasting syndrome: ...Blacks should or can only occupy positions in Afro-American studies or

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[9]Smith, 324.

[10]Smith, 327.

[11]"The New Wave of College Presidents," Ebony, November 1991: 34.

perhaps student support services.[12] Typecasting is simply another form of stereotyping that prevents minorities from becoming fully integrated into all areas of academe (Miller 29). Society is changing and consequently, white academe will have to seriously consider the merits and contributions of the Black administrator and strive to allow him to become involved at policy-making levels where he will have a marked impact - if higher education is to survive. The institution that is truly concerned about its survival no doubt has a clear philosophically approach in regards to its diversity and will not allow for "pacification" to be the means as its leaders are sought.

The future and success of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) will depend solely on the type of leadership at its helm. In 1982, a National Center for Education Statistics study entitled, "The Traditionally Black Institutions of Higher Education, 1860-1982," reported that in the 19 states and the District of Columbia where the traditionally Black institutions are located, over one-half of the Black administrators employed in higher education are in Black institutions.[13] Conversely, whereas 16% of the administrators at HBCUs are white, only 2.5% of the administrators at predominantly white institutions are Black (Sudarkasa 4). Critically, this affirmed that the numbers of Black

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[12]Miller, 29.

[13]Niara Sudarkasa, "Affirmative Action or Affirmation of the Status Quo? -Black Faculty and Administrators in Higher Education," American Association for Higher Education Bulletin (February 1987): 4.

administrators are not only declining in predominantly white institutions but at HBCUs as well. In addition, the Supreme Court recently began to address the historic issue of desegregation in higher education for the first time. In light of the Adams decision - where many of the traditional Black public institutions were mandated to substantially reduce the percentage of Black faculty and administrators on campus, as well as the percentage of Black students - it is conceivable that the Court will declare that colleges with a Black majority are unconstitutional. This result could signal the demise of Black colleges and universities. The Court's decision would only accelerate the steadily declining number of Blacks in higher education; thus, their future at a forever quandary, simply because that void is not, and consequently would not be, filled with opportunities elsewhere in higher education. Therefore, the survival and revitalization of HBCUs and predominantly Black institutions is crucial to the broadening of opportunities for Blacks in higher education.

The role of the Black administrator at a HBCU usually assumes a number of "positions" when dealing with its students: friend, advisor, mentor, counselor, etc. The Black administrator at a HBCU has been able to be "all-these-things" because he/she is in a position or part of a hierarchy that allows for the ability (and responsibility) to act on student problems and/or concerns. Increasingly, Black colleges and universities have become sources of Black pride and it is due largely to educators and administrators regarding same as integral to the education of

Blacks willing and wanting to thrive in a Black environment. The challenge, thus, to the Black administrator is clear:

> Black people in this country ... are looking to Black intellectuals for leadership in understanding and interpreting their own identity, the meaning of racial differences, the role of the Black man in history, and the significance of the Black experience (Tucker 319).

NECESSARY REQUISITES

With the demographics in higher education changing, its administrators will increasingly be those who are now commonly referred to as "minority". Consequently, higher education would be in a state of abyss if it does not spend more time, money, and effort developing and utilizing its administrators of the future. If the Black administrator is to be truly effective, it is his responsibility to ensure that his potential(s) is fully developed. Today, college and university administration is a specialty requiring knowledge, training, and skill.[14] Traditionally, most Black administrators have had little or no preparation for their jobs. They have been either taken from the faculty ranks with little or no experience or they have been given positions in which they learn as they go. However, while its true that we learn from others by observing them in action, Birnbaum notes that as institutions become larger and more complex, knowledge of legalities, federal regulations, management information systems, student financial procedures, grant and contract administration,

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[14]Frederick J. Walsh, "Administrators For the Future," Liberal Education 76 (January/February 1990): 20.

and many other areas of specialized expertise is needed to accomplish the many administrative tasks.[15] The increasing numbers and importance of managers at all levels have led to the "administered university". This concept requires the administrator have the expertise to fully understand the process of decision making that is at the heart of many administrative issues. "The administrative demands of present-day academe have expanded to the point where reliance on professorial experience [only] is no longer sufficient."[16] Further, Perez says that deans, vice-presidents, and presidents must now possess a broad range of skills in administrating and managing an institution, lobbying, and tapping multiple funding sources in addition to demonstrating accomplishments as a teacher and scholar.[17] Arthur Levine says that while it was once possible to watch the president rise from the faculty - the institution could afford to take the risk of letting that person learn on the job - now, there's more to lose by choosing a novice.[18]

Formal training experiences are a necessary component of leadership development. The American Council on Education's (ACE)

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[15]Robert Birnbaum, How Colleges Work - The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989), 7.

[16]Maria Perez, "Recruiting Leaders," Liberal Education 76 (January/February 1990): 15.

[17]Perez, 15.

[18]Arthur Levine, "Perspectives: Preparing The Next Generation of Academic Leaders," Liberal Education 76 (January/February 1990): 39.

Office of Leadership Development, Harvard's Institute for Educational Management (IEM), the National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA), the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), the Institute for Innovation in Community Colleges (IICC) and the Kellogg National Fellows Program are but a few of the viable programs that prepare people for higher education leadership positions. Each of these type programs are designed to promote the development of strong, informed, and skilled leaders that higher education will need as it embarks on the twenty-first century. The foci of each program centers on equipping administrators to:

1. **rethink and expend their vision of the academic mission**
2. **renew their sense of intellectual confidence**
3. **overcome the sense of isolation in their positions**
4. **deepen their perception of what leadership entails.**

Particularly, Harvard's IEM purpose is to provide senior-level higher education administrators with the leadership and management skills needed to effectively guide their institutions. The program specifically addresses leadership and administrative questions in four major areas: (1) monitoring the curriculum, (2) setting directions, (3) garnering resources and support, and (4) managing implementation. Another program that Harvard has designed is its Management Development Program, which provides middle-level administrators with the advanced skills and updated knowledge they need to grow with their institutions. Administrators can get this additional training by attending programs such as these or ones

that are similar, or through a graduate program in administration.

In essence, the Black administrator no longer can rely solely on his laurels of the past. He must now increase his skills and understanding of areas within, as well as outside of, his area of specialization. Brown cautions this is especially crucial, since most individuals are often chosen to lead before they have had the opportunity to season their leadership [and managerial] skills.[19] Today's administrator must be cognizant of the need to increase organizational effectiveness by seeking more rational ways to make decisions and more structured methods to solve problems. Critically, Birnbaum says that effective administrators act thinkingly (that is, by paying attention, by discovering meanings, and by self-correction) rather than unthinkingly (that is, by rote, by impulse, or mindlessly).[20] Consequently, leadership development has to be an integral part of every administrator's job.

FUTURE REALITIES

The spotlight on higher education has never been more intense than it is today. One of higher education's most important task is planning for the future. Levine stated "it is vitally important that each college and university recognize that it determines its

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[19]David G. Brown, "Perspectives: Preparing The Next Generation of Academic Leaders," Liberal Education 76 (January/February 1990): 32.

[20]Birnbaum, 213.

own future."[21] Higher education cannot, however, treat the Black administrator as it did in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. In fact, higher education has to tilt against the rampart "exclusionism" that has permeated since that initial reaction and response to crisis. "Inclusion" for the sake of placation, however, is not the road that higher education must follow. That all-too-familiar path has resulted in the inequalities the Black administrator has in the power and authority structure he wields as compared to his white counterpart. No longer can higher education accept the apparent correlation between those positions into which Blacks are appointed and how white academe perceives Blacks in terms of their ability to perform in a particular task. Wilson denounced "the period favoring the inclusion of minorities, when the plurality of that inclusion was in marginal and peripheral programs and positions most vulnerable to elimination."[22] Levine made the following statement regarding the historical plight of minorities in academe:

> ...there's a ghettoization process: they end up in student affairs, they end up as affirmative action coordinators, and they end up in admissions. They don't end up in academic jobs that lead to presidencies and senior positions.[23]

Higher education must lament this type of climate and strive to

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[21]Arthur Levine, Shaping Higher Education's Future: Demographic Realities and Opportunities, 1990-2000 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), 7.

[22]Reginald Wilson, "Recruitment and Retention of Minority Faculty and Staff," American Association for Higher Education Bulletin (February 1987): 12.

[23]Arthur Levine, "Perspectives: Preparing The Next Generation of Academic Leaders," 39.

earnestly create an "inclusionary" environment. It must look upon the Black administrator as one who is appointed to a traditional line position giving him legitimate authority and sufficient power to implement decisions once made.[24] Higher education has to break its historic pattern of resistance in the academy to the meaningful inclusion of Blacks in the mainstream, especially in white institutions and particularly those that are research institutions. Blacks without question will have to prepare themselves for this "modern-day" concept of the abilities an administrator should possess; he must be competent, and not content. Today's administrator is a highly capable - by virtue of being highly trained - specialist; common sense alone is no longer sufficient.

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[24]Smith, 329.

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